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The Arbitration Treaties.

We had expected to be able to announce in this issue that the arbitration treaties, which were sent by President Roosevelt to the Senate in December, had been ratified by that body. But as we go to press with our February number no action has yet been taken on them. The Committee on Foreign Affairs, to which they were referred, has not yet even reported on them.

There remains but four weeks until Congress will adjourn, and it begins to look as if the treaties were doomed to failure. Even if they are favorably reported by the Committee on Foreign Relations, they will have to meet their real peril in the body of the Senate. The latest reports from Washington say that all of the Republican members of the committee, and some of the Democratic members, are in favor of the approval of the treaties without amendment. They will probably, therefore, be within a short time favorably reported.

The delay of these treaties has been a source of great disappointment throughout the country. It is rare, indeed, that public measures receive such practically unanimous support as they have received.

The great business organizations in the cities have urged prompt action on them, as have popular mass meetings, and all sorts of organizations interested in the public welfare. Newspaper approval of them has been likewise remarkably strong. The case in their favor has seemed to the people so clear and strong that they have been unable to get it through their heads how such a body of men as the Senate could find any reasonable ground for opposing them.

The Irish opposition to the treaty with Great Britain—they have opposed no others—we do not believe has had any influence on the Senate. It has been feeble at the best, and so utterly baseless that it has made no serious impression. Their cry has been that we should avoid any kind of an alliance with Great Britain, that she is endeavoring through this treaty to get us into a position where we shall be compelled to pull her chestnuts out of the fire for her, support her in her wars, land robberies, etc. But how a treaty that is to run for only five years, that excludes from its operation questions of "vital interest" and national "honor," and provides only for the submission to the Hague Court of questions of a judicial order and those arising in the interpretation of treaties, can be twisted into the semblance of an alliance, under which we shall be pulled around by the nose at the sweet will of England, passes comprehension. Why should not the simple treaty, if it possesses such mysterious power, be just as likely to work the other way, and England's nose get pulled? And why are not the treaties with other countries, drawn in identical terms, just as dangerous as the one with Great Britain? Our Irish friends, who are usually ready to support all of the best forward movements, have for once lost their sense of humor. They will be sorry later that they have allowed their dislike of England, however justifiable it may be from a historic point of view, to lead them blindly to oppose one of the best measures of civilization ever put forward.

No less baseless are the grounds of opposition advanced by certain Senators. But they are sufficient, if persisted in, to kill the treaties. The absurd rule of the Senate never to limit debate makes it possible for one or two stubborn men to worry any measure to death. President Roosevelt has told the Southern Senators that the proposal to collect repudiated State carpet-bag bonds through the Hague Court, and thus to coerce the State governments, is a proposition that would not be entertained by any President. That